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## WILLIAM COE COLLAR

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BY CLARENCE W. GLEASON  
Roxbury Latin School

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By the death of William Coe Collar, on February 27, not only teachers of the classics but all secondary-school workers throughout the land have lost a sincere friend. It is not an exaggeration to say that no one in the last half-century has done so much to shape the course of classical education, or perhaps to develop a well-rounded course of general study in our schools. Hundreds of teachers, old and young alike, have looked to him for inspiration, and both the example of his work in the classroom and the many textbooks which he wrote or edited have been helpful to thousands. The bold departure from the beaten path which his human *Beginner's Latin Book* ventured gave a new impetus to the teaching of Latin and saved many a young teacher's pedagogical life.

Dr. Collar was born at Ashford, Connecticut, on September 11, 1833, and was in his eighty-third year at the time of his death. He was educated in the country schools and attended Amherst College, where he received a degree of A.B. in 1859, with an honorary degree of A.M. in 1864, and L.H.D. in 1901. Harvard gave him an honorary A.M. in 1870, in recognition of his great work as a teacher.

In 1857 Dr. Collar began his long period of service at the Roxbury Latin School, where he taught for fifty years, the last forty as headmaster—a record of a half-century of continuous service rarely, if ever, surpassed in this country. Dr. Collar found the school at Roxbury a small institution, of some local fame for scholarship since the early days of the colony, but little known away from home. Under his inspiring leadership it increased and multiplied, and when he resigned in 1907, to become headmaster emeritus, its reputation was no longer merely local, but national. Its graduates are found in all parts of the United States, and in various foreign cities; while Dr. Collar's books are used even in distant New Zealand.



WILLIAM COE COLLAR

Dr. Collar was an earnest student, a convincing teacher, and a true gentleman. Among the sterling qualities which made him a valued addition to whatever circle he found himself in, perhaps three traits stand out more conspicuously than the rest: his deep love of good scholarship, a rare sense of justice, and an unusual gift of friendship, of kindly thoughtfulness for others.

He was an insatiate reader along widely divergent lines of interest. He had an extraordinary power of absorbing what he read, and a rare skill in imparting it with his own illuminating comments. To the very end of his life he kept up a keen interest in and intimate acquaintance with the topics of national importance. In school his frequent summaries of current events, of "history in the making," as he often called it, were vivid and stimulating.

From his wide reading and extensive study—especially of the classic authors whom he loved so well—he gained a remarkable skill in the use of English. His many addresses at school and college functions and on other public occasions, frequently extemporeaneous, had a polish and aptness of expression seldom surpassed.

Those associated with him in school work will long remember the wisdom and justness of his administration, a justness often tempered with sympathy and mercy. A record of his numerous acts of kindness and generosity would be too long to set down here. Fortunate indeed were we who were privileged to work with and under him. We miss the friend and guide, the kindly critic, ever ready with his words of advice and help, whose generously bestowed commendation made smooth many a rough way and brightened many a dark hour.

If aught in monument our age survive,  
    Not only of the strugglers in the glare  
Of the gross world, who for a conquest strive,  
    But of those habitants of upland air,  
Who feed the springs of life, whereof mankind  
    Must ever drink—if this be lasting fame—  
Then, Friend, for whom our grateful hands have twined  
    This garland of a night—long lives thy name.\*

\* From "Lines to William C. Collar," read by Rev. Theodore C. Williams at the alumni dinner, 1902.